

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (currently amended) Apparatus to add weight to an athletic ball striking bat, having a taper along the bat length, comprising in combination:

a) a sleeve sized to extend about the bat at the taper location,

b) the sleeve having associated retention means to engage the bat at a zone along said taper to resist lengthwise removal of the sleeve off the bat during bat swinging,

c) annularly disposed weight means ~~at least one donut shaped weight~~ carried by the sleeve[.],

d) and including said bat and having a handle spaced endwise from the sleeve, the entirety of said retention means located endwise between said handle and the entirety of said weight means,

e) the sleeve radially and annularly embracing the weight means and the retention means at locations between which the sleeve extends lengthwise continuously and annularly.

Claim 2 (cancelled)

Claim 3 (cancelled)

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Claim 4 (cancelled)

Claim 5 (currently amended) The combination of claim [[2]] 1 wherein said retention means has an arcuate interior surface to engage said zone at an arcuately spaced location.

Claim 6 (original) The combination of claim 1 wherein said retention means comprises a plurality of spaced apart retention members.

Claim 7 (currently amended) The combination of claim 1 wherein the sleeve ~~support~~ has at least one longitudinally extending expansion slit ~~slits~~ to accommodate the expansion of the sleeve ~~system~~ for different sized bats ~~implements~~.

Claim 8 (cancelled)

Claim 9 (cancelled)

Claim 10 (original) The combination of claim 1 wherein said sleeve is generally cylindrical.

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Claim 11 (original) The combination of claim 10 wherein said associated means includes an annular retainer at the inner side of the sleeve, and which has an inner surface to engage the bat taper, said surface having a configuration which is generally cylindrical and tapered, lengthwise of the sleeve.

Claim 12 (currently amended) The combination of claim 11 including at least one pocket carried by the sleeve and receiving said weight means.

Claim 13 (original) The combination of claim 12 including a first device on the sleeve for pulling the sleeve along the bat during assembly of the sleeve to the bat.

Claim 14 (original) The combination of claim 13 including a second device on the sleeve for pulling the sleeve along the bat during disassembly of the sleeve off the bat.

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Claim 15 (original) The combination of claim 13 wherein said device is a first loop at a location near the sleeve and that faces in the direction of sleeve assembly onto the bat.

Claim 16 (original) The combination of claim 13 wherein said second device is a loop at a location near the sleeve end that faces in the direction of sleeve disassembly off the bat.

Claim 17 (cancelled)

Claim 18 (cancelled)

Claim 19 (currently amended) The combination of claim ~~16~~ 12 wherein said at least one pocket is spaced about an axis defined by the sleeve.

Claim 20 (cancelled)

Claim 21 (currently amended) The combination of claim 11 wherein said retainer inner surface ~~is~~ has conical shape.

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Claim 22 (original) The combination of claim 12 wherein said at least one pocket is sewn to a sleeve comprising a flexible material.

Claim 23 (original) The combination of claim 1 wherein the sleeve has a resiliently expansible section to allow sleeve to fit to a bat of larger diameter.

Claim 24 (original) The combination of claim 1 including an annular insert in the sleeve, at an end of the sleeve, to block inward bunching of the sleeve end, toward a bat zone.

Claim 25 (currently amended) The combination of claim [[1]] 24 wherein the insert is proximate the ~~retainer~~ retention means, and consists of lightweight material.

Claim 26 (original) The method of affixing a sleeve as defined in claim 1 that includes the following steps

- i) relatively advancing the sleeve in a first direction onto said bat to position said associated means at said zone along the bat taper,
- ii) practice swinging the bat, and
- iii) ~~and~~ subsequently relatively retracting the sleeve off the bat in second direction opposite the first direction.

Claim 27 (original) The combination of claim 1 wherein the sleeve includes inner and outer sleeves, the inner sleeve having a wall that acts as a protector, for the bat.

Claim 28 (original) The combination of claim 1 wherein the retention means includes a retainer carried by the sleeve.

Claim 29 (original) The combination of claim 1 wherein the retention means includes a retainer carried by a pocket on the sleeve.

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Claim 30 (currently amended) The combination of claim 1 including a frame carried by the sleeve, the weight ~~or weights~~ means carried by the frame.

Claim 31 (original) The combination of claim 1 wherein the sleeve has end portion defined by flaps which are edge connected to form a reduced diameter sleeve section to closely fit about a bat narrowed sections.

Claim 32 (original) The combination of claim 1 wherein the sleeve has two sections, one of larger diameter or diameters than the other.

Claim 33 (cancelled)

Claim 34 (original) The combination of claim 1 wherein the sleeve has inner and outer sections, the sleeve inner section being semi-rigid.

Claim 35 (currently amended) A weighting device for use on an athletic ball striker as during swinging of the striker, and including the striker in the form of a baseball bat having a ball striking portion and handle, comprising in combination:

a) an elongated ~~receptable~~ receptacle having an opening via which the striker ball striking portion is received into the receptacle, with the handle projecting from the receptacle,

b) a retainer carried on the receptacle for retaining the receptacle in generally enclosing relation to the striker,

c) there being an annularly shaped weight means ~~material~~ disposed about an axis defined by the striker, and structure holding said weight means in position relative to the striker[[.]],

d) and including said striker having a handle,
the entirety of the retainer location endwise of the striker
between and spaced from the handle and the entirety of the
weight means, the receptacle being annularly continuous
along the entirety of its length.

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Claim 36 (currently amended) The combination of claim 35 wherein said structure includes a pocket or pockets spaced about the bat and in which said weight means is or are confined.

Claim 37 (currently amended) The combination of claim 1 wherein said weight means is disposed at an annular location about an axis defined by the bat, there being holder structure disposed about the bat and connected to the sleeve for holding said weight means in position relative to the bat.

Claim 38 (cancelled)

Claim 39 (cancelled)

Claim 40 (cancelled)

Claim 41 (cancelled)

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Claim 42 (currently amended) A weighting device for use on an athletic striker comprising a donut shaped member having an outer fabric casing, an inner fabric casing and being filled with a flowable material[[.]], said member having an inner locus of engagement with the striker, and said weight material spaced form said locus to receive pulling force in a direction away from said locus, as the striker is swung.

Claim 43 (new) Apparatus to add weight to an athletic ball striking bat, having a handle and taper along the bat length, comprising in combination:

a) a sleeve sized to extend about the bat at the taper location,

b) the sleeve having associated retention means to engage the bat at an engagement zone along said taper to resist lengthwise removal of the sleeve off the bat during bat swinging,

c) weight means carried by the sleeve,

d) and including said bat and having a handle spaced endwise from the sleeve, the entirety of said retention means located endwise between said handle and the entirety of said weight means,

e) and wherein the sleeve has at least one generally longitudinally extending expansion slit.

Claim 44 (new) Apparatus to add weight to an athletic balls striking bat, having a handle and taper along the bat length, comprising in combination:

a) a sleeve sized to extend about the bat at the taper location,

b) the sleeve having associated retention means to effectively engage the bat at an engagement zone along said taper to resist lengthwise removal of the sleeve off the bat during bat swinging,

c) weight means carried by the sleeve,

d) and including said bat and having a handle spaced endwise from the sleeve, the entirety of said retention means located endwise between said handle and the entirety of said weight means,

e) and wherein said sleeve is cylindrical,

f) and wherein said associated means includes an annular retainer at the inner side of the sleeve, and which has an inner surface to engage the bat taper, said inner surface having a configuration which is generally cylindrical and tapered, lengthwise of the sleeve.

Claim 45 (new) Apparatus to add weight to an athletic ball striking bat, having a handle and taper along the bat length, comprising in combination:

a) a sleeve sized to extend about the bat at the taper location,

b) the sleeve having associated retention means to effectively engage the bat at a zone along said taper to resist lengthwise removal of the sleeve off the bat during bat swinging,

c) weight means carried by the sleeve,

d) and including said bat and having a handle spaced endwise from the sleeve, the entirety of said retention means located endwise between said handle and the entirety of said weight means,

e) and including an annular insert in the sleeve, at an end of the sleeve, to block inward bunching of the sleeve end, toward a bat zone.

Claim 46 (new) Apparatus to add weight to an athletic ball striking bat, having a handle and taper along the bat length, comprising in combination:

a) a sleeve sized to extend about the bat at the taper location

b) the sleeve having associated retention means to effectively engage the bat at a zone along said taper to resist lengthwise removal of the sleeve off the bat during bat swinging,

c) weight means carried by the sleeve,

d) and including said bat and having a handle spaced endwise from the sleeve, the entirety of said retention means located endwise between said handle and the entirety of said weight means,

e) and wherein said sleeve is cylindrical,

f) and wherein said associated means includes an annular retainer at the inner side of the sleeve, and which has an inner surface to engage the bat taper, said inner surface having a configuration which is generally cylindrical and tapered, lengthwise of the sleeve,

g) and including an annular insert in the sleeve, at an end of the sleeve, to block inward bunching of the sleeve end, toward a bat zone.

Claim 47 (new) A weighting device for use on an athletic ball striker as during swinging of the striker, and including the striker having a handle, comprising in combination:

a) a receptacle having an opening via which the striker ball striking portion is receivable into the receptacle, with the handle projecting from the receptacle,

b) a retainer positioned for retaining the receptacle to the striker ball striking portion,

c) and weighting structure carried by the receptacle to add substantial weight to the striker, for use as in striker practice swinging,

d) said retainer including a holder that is applied in a retaining position proximate a local portion of the receptacle, to effect retention of the receptacle to the striker during said practice swinging, substantially the entirety of said holder located between the handle and said weighting structure whereby pulling force exerted via the weighting structure and via the receptacle are well distributed to said holder via the receptacle, during said practice swinging,

e) said retainer having coating, and located at the side of fabric, that receives loading transmitted by said weighting structure, said coating consisting of one of the following:

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- i) rubber,
- ii) foam.

Claim 48 (new) A method for fabricating a swinging sport weighted practice implement comprising the following steps:

- a) sewing an inner wall comprising a fabric layer,
- b) inserting a bag of a weighted material into the fabric,
- c) applying a rubber coated retainer to the fabric, the entirety of the retainer spaced endwise from the weighted material,
- d) applying a layer of a foam,
- e) attaching a plurality of cross straps over the foam for added support; and
- f) applying at least one additional outer layer comprising a fabric.

Claim 49 (new) The method of claim 48 further comprising the step of applying an additional layer of a foam.

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Claim 50 (new) The method of claim 49 further comprising the step of applying an additional fabric layer.